

## Northern Powerhouse Rail: Manchester Connection Information Paper

### B2: Main provisions of the planning regime

This paper outlines the main provisions of the planning regime proposed for the Proposed Scheme.

Content will be maintained and updated as considered appropriate during the passage of the Bill.

HS2 Ltd's Rail Development Directorate are acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport to develop and promote the Bill. If you have any queries about this paper or about how it might apply to you, please contact the Helpdesk in the first instance.

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) is the government’s plan to provide more reliable and frequent services between key economic centres in the North of England. NPR forms the transport backbone of the Northern Growth Strategy and will deliver a “turn-up-and-go” railway linking Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds/Bradford, Sheffield and York, with regular onward services to Newcastle, Hull and Chester for North Wales connections.
- 1.2 NPR will be delivered in three phases:
- (1) early upgrades and electrification east of the Pennines (Leeds–Bradford, Sheffield-Leeds, Leeds–York);
  - (2) a new Liverpool–Manchester route via new stations at Warrington Bank Quay (Low Level) and Manchester Airport; and
  - (3) further cross-Pennine enhancements beyond the Transpennine Route Upgrade, including Manchester-Leeds, Manchester-Bradford and Manchester-Sheffield.
- 1.3 The first phase of NPR prioritises the upgrades to existing lines east of the Pennines. The adapted High Speed Rail (Crewe- Manchester) Bill, (hereafter ‘the Bill’) has been taken forward as part of the second phase of NPR to obtain the necessary powers to deliver the NPR route into Manchester via Manchester Airport (the Proposed Scheme). The Bill, formerly designed to deliver the route between Crewe to Manchester, has been adapted to retain only the section of route from the Parish of Millington and Rostherne to Manchester Piccadilly, via a new station at Manchester Airport (also known as NPR’s ‘Manchester Connection’). For further information about the development of the Bill, please see information paper A1.
- 1.4 The government has also confirmed its intention to ultimately complete a new line between Birmingham and Manchester. This is not included in this Bill and this would be progressed following the delivery of the three stages of NPR.
- 1.5 The work to produce the Bill includes an Equalities Impact Assessment and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the results of which are reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted alongside the Bill. The Secretary of State for Transport has also published draft Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs), which set out the environmental and sustainability commitments that will be observed in the construction of the Proposed Scheme. For more information on the EMRs please see Information Paper E1: Control of environmental impacts.

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- 1.6 The Secretary of State for Transport is the Promoter of the Bill through Parliament. The Promoter will also appoint a body responsible for delivering the Proposed Scheme under the powers granted by the Bill. Following Royal Assent this body will be the 'nominated undertaker'. There may be more than one nominated undertaker. However, any and all nominated undertakers will be bound by the obligations contained in the Bill, and the policies and commitments established in the EMRs, including any commitments provided in the information papers.
- 1.7 HS2 Ltd is a non-departmental public body and their Rail Development Directorate is responsible for developing and promoting these proposals for the purposes of the Bill. The company works under the terms of a Development Agreement entered into with the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.8 These information papers have been produced to explain the commitments made in the Bill and the EMRs and how they will be applied to the design and construction of the Proposed Scheme. They also provide information about the Proposed Scheme itself, the powers contained in the Bill and how particular decisions about the Proposed Scheme have been reached.
- 1.9 When they were originally published, the information papers for the Bill were consistent with the policies, schemes and standards that had been applied for HS2 Phase 1 and 2a, as the Proposed Scheme was intended to be part of that project. They have now been updated and republished to reflect the changes to the Bill. In light of the origin and continuation of the Bill, the information papers continue to generally reflect the policies and commitments originally set out for the Bill before it was adapted relating to the control of impacts on the environment and on property owners, communities and businesses. This includes adopting a version of the HS2 Environmental Policy for the purposes of this Bill. This reflects the Bill's advanced progress through Parliament; the Bill has been taken forward on the basis that these policies and commitments will apply and the government intends to honour them for reasons of fairness towards those affected or concerned.
- 1.10 This approach reflects the particular circumstances of this Bill, and the commitments set out in these Information Papers do not set, and should not be considered as setting, any precedent for future proposals connected to the NPR programme, or any other future rail scheme. The policies and commitments offered in relation to future schemes will need to be considered in the context of any applications for consent on their own merits.

## 2 Overview

- 2.1 This information paper outlines the main provisions of the planning regime proposed for the Proposed Scheme, which would come into force upon enactment of the Bill. The provisions vary depending on whether the local planning authority opts to become a qualifying authority or a non-qualifying authority. References to provisions of the Bill are references to the Bill as it is proposed to be amended following the instruction to the Select Committee of 21st May 2024.
- 2.2 The design of the Proposed Scheme to date provides the level of detail necessary for the purposes of the Bill and the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. The level of detailed design necessary to enable the Proposed Scheme to be constructed has yet to be carried out, and will not be completed until after the Bill has secured Royal Assent.
- 2.3 Once it is complete the nominated undertaker will need to apply to local authorities along the route for approval of the detailed design of a range of elements of the Proposed Scheme. This will allow local planning authorities to ensure that the design of permanent structures fits into the local environment. Local planning authorities will also be able to input into the approval of certain construction matters and have a level of control over their enforcement. Section 7 below outlines the role of local authorities in the approval of detailed works before they are brought into use.

### **3 Qualifying and non-qualifying authorities**

- 3.1 Local planning authorities can sign up to the Planning Memorandum. If local authorities opt to sign up to this, they will have a wide range of controls over the detailed design of permanent structures such as stations and viaducts and will also have an enhanced role in relation to certain enforcement and construction matters. These authorities are referred to as ‘qualifying authorities’ and will be identified by the Secretary of State in accordance with Part 2 of Schedule 17 after Royal Assent.
- 3.2 Those who do not sign up to the Planning Memorandum are referred to as ‘non-qualifying authorities’ and will be able to approve the detailed design of permanent structures but will have a more restricted role in the approval of construction matters.

## 4 Approval of detailed design

4.1 A local planning authority that becomes a qualifying authority under Part 2 of Schedule 17 will be required to approve plans and specifications for works such as buildings and road vehicle parks, terracing, cuttings, embankments and other earthworks, fences, walls or other barriers, transformers, telecommunication masts, pedestrian access to the railway line, artificial lighting, waste and spoil disposal and borrow pits. They will not have powers of approval for any works or features of a temporary nature, for anything underground except any part of a station available for use without a ticket, nor for any tunnel or railway track bed.

4.2 The local planning authority can only refuse to approve (or impose conditions in respect of) the plans and specifications on the grounds specified in Schedule 17. There are, in broad terms, two main sets of grounds on which the work may be refused or conditioned by a qualifying authority:

- The design or external appearance of the building works ought to be modified
  - i. to preserve the local environment or local amenity;
  - ii. to prevent or reduce prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area; or
  - iii. to preserve a site of archaeological or historic interest or nature conservation value,and is reasonably capable of being so modified; or
- The development ought to, and could reasonably, be carried out elsewhere on land within the Act limits.

4.3 The Bill provides that in determining whether or not to grant approval to a request or to impose conditions upon an approval, a local planning authority should have regard to the EMRs. These set out principles that the nominated undertaker should follow in developing the detailed design and that may be taken into account by planning authorities when considering requests for approvals of the plans and specifications. The local planning authority should consider whether the proposals are consistent with the EMRs and should not impose conditions which are inconsistent with the EMRs. They will also need to consider the statutory guidance produced by the Secretary of State for Transport under Paragraph 28 of Schedule 17.

- 4.4 A non-qualifying local planning authority will be required to approve plans and specifications for buildings. Non-qualifying authorities will only be able to refuse approval if the design or external appearance of the works ought to be modified to preserve the local environment or local amenity, and is reasonably capable of being so modified, or the development ought to, and could reasonably, be carried out elsewhere on land within the Act limits.

## 5 Construction controls

- 5.1 The nominated undertaker will be bound, through the EMRs, to adopt and implement the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) for the Proposed Scheme. A draft of the CoCP has already been consulted on with the relevant local planning authorities and statutory bodies. Other commitments in the EMRs will govern construction, including a commitment that the nominated undertaker's contractors will seek consents under section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in relation to noise generating activities and hours of working.
- 5.2 In addition, qualifying authorities will be able to enforce construction arrangements relating to:
- handling of re-useable spoil or topsoil;
  - road transport;
  - storage sites for construction materials, spoil or topsoil;
  - construction camps;
  - works screening;
  - artificial lighting;
  - dust suppression; and
  - road mud control measures.
- 5.3 Construction arrangements relating to handling of re-useable spoil or topsoil; storage sites for construction materials, spoil or topsoil; works screening; artificial lighting; dust suppression; and road mud control measures are likely to be generic. These may be subject to a class approval by the Secretary of State under Paragraph 5 of Schedule 17 to the Bill without the need for approval by the relevant qualifying authority.
- 5.4 The Secretary of State when making a class approval may attach conditions to it and must consult the local planning authorities before making the class approval. Should the Secretary of State not make a class approval, these arrangements are subject to approval by the relevant qualifying authority.
- 5.5 Construction arrangements relating to construction camps, which provide temporary residential accommodation for construction staff, and road transport (i.e. lorry routes with more than 24 lorry movements per day on roads between the relevant sites and the nearest trunk road or motorway) are site specific and so require individual approval from the relevant qualifying planning authority.
- 5.6 Qualifying authorities may refuse approval if the arrangements ought to be modified to preserve the local environment or local amenity, or to prevent or reduce the prejudicial effects on road safety, or on the free flow of traffic in the local area, and are reasonably capable of being so modified.

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- 5.7 Other parts of the Bill also offer control over related construction arrangements. Paragraph 1 of Schedule 5 requires highway authority approval of plans and specifications of any design of a new access onto, or the alteration of, a highway used by vehicular traffic as a result of the construction or operation of the Proposed Scheme, if the location is shown on the deposited plans. If the location is not shown on the deposited plan consent for this access or alteration is required from the highway authority.
- 5.8 Under the provisions of the CoCP, the nominated undertaker will have to prepare a Traffic Management Plan which will outline the traffic control measures and routes on public highways that will be used during construction. The Plan will take account of the requirements and advice of the highway authority and other authorities, and will provide a framework for the preparation of submissions under Schedule 17.

## **6 Restoration of construction sites**

- 6.1 Where a site is used only for construction purposes, the site must be restored in accordance with a scheme submitted to the local planning authority within four months of the discontinuation of works at the site. Where no such scheme is agreed, the site must be restored in accordance with a scheme determined by the appropriate Ministers.

## **7 Bringing works into use**

- 7.1 The bringing into use of any scheduled work or depot, except to the extent that the work is underground, is subject to prior approval by the qualifying local planning authority. The qualifying local planning authority must grant prior approval if it considers that there are no reasonably practicable measures which need to be taken for the purposes of mitigating the impacts of the work, or its operation, or if it has approved a mitigation scheme for that purpose submitted by the nominated undertaker. The qualifying local planning authority can only refuse or impose conditions upon such a scheme if it is satisfied that it is expedient to do so on the grounds that the scheme ought to be modified, and is reasonably capable of being so modified, in order to preserve the local environment, local amenity, a site of archaeological or historic interest, or in the interests of nature conservation.

## **8 Context Report**

- 8.1 Paragraph 16 of Schedule 17 to the Bill requires the nominated undertaker to deposit with a relevant local planning authority a document setting out its proposed programme of requests for approval. It also requires that the requests themselves be accompanied by a document which explains how the matters to which the request relates fit into the overall scheme of the works. It is intended that these requirements will be met by the nominated undertaker producing a document which contains this information for each local planning authority, and these documents will be referred to as context reports. These documents should be submitted to the local planning authority prior to any request for approval being made to that authority.

## **9 Consultation**

- 9.1 The nominated undertaker will be required under the Planning Memorandum to engage in forward discussions with local planning authorities about prospective requests for approval. This facilitates effective consultation and helps to ensure that requests for approval of the plans and specifications and construction arrangements are determined within the timetables referred to in Schedule 17.

## **10 Timeframe for approval of requests**

- 10.1 Unlike applications for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act, the Bill does not provide for a validation process. Requests for approval under Schedule 17 are not requests for planning permission because planning permission is deemed to be granted under the Bill. Information submitted with a request for approval under Schedule 17 will not be required to comply with a planning authority's Planning Application Validation Check List.
- 10.2 A local planning authority has a period of 8 weeks to determine a request, beginning with the date on which the request is received by that planning authority. The nominated undertaker may choose to agree to an extension of the 8-week period, but in the absence of such agreement may appeal immediately after the end of that period to the appropriate Ministers.

## **11 Determining planning authority**

11.1 In unitary authority areas the determining authority for all submissions under Schedule 17 is the unitary council for that area. In areas with two tiers of local government (ie district and county councils) the district planning authority is the determining authority for all approvals except for any required approvals relating to the following which are determined by the county planning authority:

- approvals in relation to development consisting of the disposal of waste or spoil and the excavation of bulk materials; and
- approvals of the routing of large goods vehicles.

## **12 Non-material changes to approvals**

- 12.1 Schedule 17 enables local planning authorities to make, at the request of the nominated undertaker, non-material changes to approvals that they have already made under the Schedule without the need for the nominated undertaker to submit a whole new approval request. These would be amendments of a minor kind, which would not affect the substance or impact of the approvals subject to the changes.

## 13 Appeals

- 13.1 Under part 3 of Schedule 17, the nominated undertaker has the right of appeal to the appropriate Ministers against any local planning authority decision to refuse a request for relevant approval or against the conditions which an authority has imposed in granting approval. For this purpose, references to the appropriate Ministers are to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Secretary of State for Transport, acting jointly.
- 13.2 The nominated undertaker can also appeal if no decision has been made within eight weeks of the receipt of the request by the local planning authority or such extended period as may be agreed between the parties. Under the Bill non-determination is treated as refusal. Notice of the appeal must be given within 42 days of the decision or of the last day of the appropriate period. Part 3 of Schedule 17 provides for the handling and determination of such an appeal.
- 13.3 The appropriate Ministers may allow or dismiss the appeal or vary the decision of the local planning authority, but may only make a determination involving the refusal of or imposition of conditions on an approval on grounds which were open to the authority itself under Schedule 17. They may also make an award of costs between the parties to the appeal.
- 13.4 The Bill provides a time limit of 6 weeks for any legal challenge to a decision on an appeal.

## **14 Compliance and enforcement**

- 14.1 Overseeing compliance with approvals and planning conditions falls to the local planning authority as an integral part of its planning responsibilities. Approvals under the planning regime in the Bill will be enforceable under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It will be for the local planning authorities to decide whether and to what extent it is expedient to take action to enforce planning control in relation to a breach of condition or approval which they consider has taken place within their area.
- 14.2 Compliance with the planning regime will be achieved through supervision of the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme by the nominated undertaker, monitoring by the local planning authority and observation by the public.

## 15 More information

- 15.1 More detail on the Bill and related documents can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/northern-powerhouse-rail-manchester-connection>.